

A better life

A look at the revitalized CHA and its impact on residents





WELCOME TO
CHELSEA

Executive Director's Message

To the Chelsea Community:

Today in public housing we are facing very challenging times. Despite limited resources, increased demand and aging housing developments dating back to the 1950s, the Chelsea Housing Authority (CHA) is committed to providing a full range of safe, secure, suitable and appropriate affordable housing options to extremely-low, very-low, and low-income family, elderly, and disabled households in a fair manner. We are committed to redeveloping our 914 units in our eight developments through public-private partnerships, tax-credit incentives, and the use of federal, state and private fund resources.

As housing professionals, we no longer just house our residents. Today it is imperative that we also provide supportive services to our family, elderly and disabled households. To provide these vital wide-ranging services, the CHA has collaborated with the city of Chelsea, community organizations, private businesses and financial institutions along with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the state office of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

This report highlights a few of our many relationships such as our partnership to maintain safe housing through our Resident Officers Program with the Chelsea Police Department and our work with the Chelsea Senior Center to provide a Brown Bag program that provides a month's worth of healthy groceries at no charge to our seniors. Our partnership with the city of Chelsea and T-Mobile helps to close the "digital divide" for our young people in public housing who can't afford internet access, while our partnership with the MASS Union of Public Housing Tenants and the Chelsea Collaborative helps train our resident councils to become empowered and engaged in housing-related issues.

Our dedicated staff and Board of Commissioners are committed to running a fiscally sound agency, improving the quality of our "brick and mortar," workforce development of our adults and youth, encouraging family self-sufficiency and providing supportive services with our partners so that our residents grow and age in place.

The CHA presents this 2019 Progress Report to share with you a look at the revitalized CHA and its impact on creating a better life for all our residents.

Regards,

Albert R. Ewing

Albert R. Ewing
Executive Director



CHA Commissioners



Chairman Bertram Taverna; Antonio Hernandez, Barbara Salisbury, Donald Kingsbury and Juan Vega

A new vision for Innes Apartments takes shape



The City has undergone an economic renaissance in recent years. When we considered our 1950s-era Innes Apartments Development against this backdrop of progress, we knew we had to take action while the opportunity was available.

Instead of a major renovation, we decided to create from the ground up. Partnering with Joseph J. Corcoran Company, a local developer, we have envisioned a \$120 million project that will complement and enhance Central Avenue, a key gateway entrance to Chelsea.

The redeveloped Innes Apartments Development will be a fully integrated mixed-use community. This innovative public/private partnership, financed largely with private capital, allows for a fully sustainable model of affordable and low-income housing. The 96 existing public housing residences will be replaced one-for-one and there will be 40 additional middle-income residences plus 194 market-rate apartments built.



The Innes Development site today.

THE MIXED-INCOME CONCEPT

This mixed-income, mixed-use community will enable residents to choose housing that reflects their financial ability and that provides practical services and opportunities for social interaction. Situated near the new Silver Line and bus routes, Innes is already ideal for working residents who rely on public transportation. But we see more – a place that fosters upward economic mobility. All current residents will be re-housed, with the first phase of construction slated to begin as soon as zoning and permitting is obtained for the site.

In addition to a range of affordable housing, plans call for:

- 2,000 sq. ft. of street-level small-business retail space
- On-site daycare facility
- Public green space
- Modern playground
- Resident center that houses job training, educational and youth services
- 226 on-site parking spots with 50 additional off-site spaces
- Amenities such as a fitness room, community room and bike storage



An aerial view of the proposed Innes Apartment Community.



A street-level conception of the new apartment complex.

We are in the initial stage of a long process that includes securing pre-approvals from local and state authorities as we move from design concept to ground breaking.

The community is being designed to be an attractive centerpiece that stimulates further investment in Chelsea's renaissance and that benefits Chelsea's economy with:

- 200-plus construction jobs
- An estimated 14-plus permanent jobs in on-site businesses and property management services
- \$3.6 million in site infrastructure improvements
- \$3.4 million in initial tax revenues, increasing to \$800,000-plus annually after 15 years
- An estimated \$120,000,000 in economic development



The Towns Place & Suites by Marriot.



The Eastponte Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center.



The Silver Line T is located nearby.



The Jordan Boys & Girls Club.



The nearby City-run park provides sports and recreational opportunities for Innes residents.

More than ever, the Innes Apartments will play a significant role in the economic and housing renaissance of Chelsea.

Collaborations benefit residents

The CHA continuously and proactively seeks to improve the quality of life for its residents in ways that include social services, exercise programs, crime watch programs and technology improvements. In all cases, collaboration is the key, and we did so with government agencies and private industry such as the Council on Aging, T-Mobile, and East Cambridge Savings Banks to provide residents with life-enhancing opportunities.



Yoga classes are just one aspect of our Senior Advocate program.

THE SENIOR ADVOCATE PROGRAM.

The CHA partnered with the Chelsea Council on Elder Affairs and the Chelsea Senior Center primarily to assist elderly and disabled residents to age in a place and live independently. The program connects residents to Senior Center programs where they can be active and involved in the wider community.

An Exercise Program enables residents to take part in up to 8 hours of activities and exercise per week, including Zumba dance classes and yoga. Other facets of the program include the Brown Bag Program, which delivers nutritious meals to residents' apartments; the Crime Watch Program, which improves resident safety; and the Counseling Program, which provides mental/emotional support.

The Senior Advocate Program continues to provide a comprehensive approach to ensuring wellness, independence and improved health for CHA residents.

The collaborations included a number of innovative programs and services

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE. An ongoing collaboration with private industry equipped young residents with computers and internet service last year. The program began in 2017 after discussions with T-Mobile and the City of Chelsea. T-Mobile, a participant in HUD's Connect Home program, donated 100 tablet computers and the City allocated \$24,000 for two years of internet service.

The program aids 100 residents in middle and/or high school in their educational endeavors. Executive Director Al Ewing said, "The forward-thinking support of T-Mobile and City Manager Tom Ambrosino will give young residents ready access to knowledge. That's critical to reaching educational goals and a brighter future."



T-Mobile, CHA and City executives join mothers and students who received computers and internet access.

THE ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER (ETF) INITIATIVE.

To help make our residents' lives more convenient, we established a new banking relationship with East Cambridge Savings Bank last year. The key electronic funds transfer feature enables residents to pay their rent electronically.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

Community Action Programs Inter-City (CAPIC) partners worked with us on a workforce development program that included basic computers, advanced computers and job-readiness classes. When residents have trouble paying for heat or face other financial difficulties, CAPIC steps in and provides assistance and financial counseling.

In these and other ways, the CHA gives resident quality of life a high priority.



Senior Advocate Geraldine Portillo provides guidance for a resident. Among other duties, Geraldine also instructs Zumba dance classes.



Joseph M. Vinard, Division President, East Cambridge Savings Bank.

Honoring former Chairman Thomas K. Standish

A natural leader and man of integrity, Tom Standish provided rock-solid leadership after the CHA was designated by HUD in December 2012 as a “Troubled Agency.”

As Chairman of the Board, Tom rose to the occasion. He directed and oversaw the turnaround of the CHA despite serious health challenges. Working with the executive team, Tom set and achieved high operating standards. He was a strong and eloquent voice in the press. He worked with our law firm to secure justice in the courts. He stood firm working with DHCD and HUD regional leaders.

We are grateful for the CHA’s remarkable transformation over the last seven years. Credit goes to many, but Tom’s leadership made a difference. He cultivated a Board culture of friendship and mutual respect, one where capable members can give their best.

Tom has moved on to a well-deserved retirement. We wish him much happiness and fulfillment.



Former Chairman of the Board, Thomas K. Standish, receives a Chelsea Clock at his retirement celebration.



Resident of the Year Joseph Pandolfo



Joe Pandolfo has been the president of the Buckley/ Union Park Resident Council for 15 years running. He has represented the over-300 elderly and disabled

residents who live here with passion and distinction.

He’s a busy man. Among the many events that Joe and resident council members organize for residents are monthly dinners, annual summer BBQs, and Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Joe can often be seen at restaurants and other local businesses securing partnerships and product donations for event raffles. He also created the on-site grocery store where residents can buy daily food needs at reduced prices. Joe and council members were also behind the more than \$3,000 worth of donated exercise equipment that residents enjoy in the community room.

Building community through resident involvement is at the core of the CHA’s mission. Reviewing Joe Pandolfo’s long-term dedication and hard work made our decision to name him CHA’s Resident of the Year for 2018 an easy one.

Moving to a life of self sufficiency



Betzaida with FSS Coordinator Carmen Torres.

A CHA resident since 2010, Betzaida had no earned income when she joined our Family Self-Sufficiency Program in October 2013. She was enrolled in an automotive mechanic program and held down a part-time job at a supermarket. However, after graduating in 2014, her school would not award a Certificate of Completion until she paid off her student loan.

Determined to pay her debt and move ahead, she received financial coaching and entered an intensive construction training program. She excelled, and program staff chose her for further training and apprenticeship at the New England Millbury Training Center.

Inspired by her FSS training, she pursued her career path while repaying her loan. In April 2017, the Thorndike Corporation hired her as an apprentice machinist. A tough commute via public transportation convinced her to make a move to Eco Lab as a Utility Specialist in March 2018 where she received good benefits plus a company van.

In short order, she boosted her credit score, made steady school loan payments, saved money and attended a first-time homeownership seminar. She is now earning \$35,400 annually. In August 2018, Betzaida graduated from the FSS Program and received her \$15,461 in escrowed savings, which will enable her one day to make a down-payment on a home!



Betzaida on the job as a Utility Specialist for pest extermination business Eco Lab.



YouthBuild students prep an apartment for painting.

Training youth for career success

The CHA and Just-A-Start YouthBuild (JASYB) have worked together for more than a decade providing young people with hands-on construction training. It's a win-win partnership in which JASYB instructors and students complete work on CHA construction projects. They graduate with real-world skills; the CHA gets quality work, affordably, that improves residents' quality of life.

Our responsibilities are three-fold:

- Enabling JASYB to recruit on site at family developments and Section 8 households
- Providing students with on-site community service opportunities plus additional opportunities for facilities maintenance training
- Assisting in finding YouthBuild graduates jobs as well as entrepreneurial subcontracting work

In 2018, JASYB students completed a number of projects, including maintenance turnover of six Prattville Development vacant units and common-area painting services in hallways, boiler rooms and building exteriors. This great program helps a wide range of young people develop marketable skills, whether they are high school dropouts, low-income adolescents, young mothers, public assistance recipients, or unemployed.

A YouthBuild student builds her drywall repair skills.



Partnering with the Chelsea Police Department gets results



Our resident police officers: Star Chung, Joe Cordes, Jose Otero, Abner Carrero and David Delaney.

In an effort to increase the public safety presence in its developments and to improve the quality of life for its residents, the Chelsea Housing Authority developed the Resident Police Officer Program 20-plus years ago. As Chelsea Police Chief Brian Kyes notes, “Because of our partnership with CHA management and residents, CHA properties have the lowest crime rate within the city.”

“Being a part of the Resident Officer Program for Chelsea Housing Authority has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my Law Enforcement career. The Resident Officer Program is the epitome of community policing and a model for other agencies to emulate. As a resident officer I’m able to interact with and assist residents with a multitude of community challenges and issues on a daily basis. This program ensures that Chelsea Housing residents’ voices are heard, and their concerns are addressed in a timely and personal manner. The partnership between the Chelsea Housing Authority and the resident officers of the Chelsea Police Department allows us to utilize a team-based and multi-faceted approach to solve community problems and ensure residents feel safe in their communities. This program represents community care-taking at its finest.”

– Officer Joe Cordes

The five police officers that patrol our properties have built a solid relationship with residents and CHA property managers. This is enhanced by the fact that all five reside at Chelsea HA properties.

This partnering program has evolved over 20-plus years. At first it provided a training ground for reserve and new officers and focused on crime in specific areas. By 2018, it grew to five seasoned officers providing an informed and broad effort. Working closely with CHA staff, they conduct daily walk-throughs of all properties, share information, resolve tenant-on-tenant disputes, follow up on all investigations and conduct monthly crime watch meetings.

In 2017, for example, the resident officers helped enforce 27 no-trespass orders issued by the CHA, and assisted CHA property managers with over 50 interviews with residents who had issues or complaints.

This is a program that has become a model for community policing in general and in housing authority safety specifically.

“The program means a lot to me because it fosters a unique level of cooperation between the housing authority and the police department. It allows us to better serve our residents and build a positive community of mutual support. This program is a great example of community-based policing and takes it to another level and I’m honored to be a part of this exceptional program.”

– Sgt. Jose Otero

Staff by department



Senior management team: Arnaldo Velazquez, Paul Nowicki, Diane Cohen, Al Ewing, Iris Perez-Feliciano, Rich Russell and Greg Beatrice.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Albert R. Ewing, Executive Director
Diane Cohen, Deputy Director
Damaris Gonzalez, Administrative Assistant

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Arnaldo L. Velazquez, Director of Finance and Administration
Leslie Esturban, AP/AR Clerk
Meriam A Mehaya, AP/AR Clerk

LEASED HOUSING DEPARTMENT

Iris Perez-Feliciano, Leased Housing Manager
Chyneatha A Perry, Leased Housing Program Representative
Stephanie Santos, Leased Housing Program Representative

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

Paul R. Nowicki, Director of Operations
Ineudira Barbosa, Occupancy Coordinator
Jacqueline Matos, Property Manager
Alexandra Jimenez, Property Manager
Vanessa Rodriguez, Property Manager

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY DEPARTMENT

Carmen Torres, FSS Coordinator

MAINTENANCE AND MODERNIZATION DEPARTMENT

Richard Russell, Director of Maintenance and Modernization
Gregory V. Beatrice, Maintenance Supervisor and Procurement Manager
Iris Rivera, Maintenance Coordinator
Anthony V. Tiro, Clerk of the Works/Inspector
John Faulstich, Maintenance – Plumber
James R. Granara, Maintenance – Electrician
James M. Krasco, Maintenance – Carpenter
Ibro Omeragic, Maintenance – Carpenter
Wayne Brooks, Maintenance – Painter
Eric Montefusco, Maintenance – Painter
Sean D. Landry, Maintenance – Mechanic
Song Suong, Maintenance – Mechanic
Angelo Zirpolo, Maintenance – Mechanic
Damon S. Webster, Maintenance – Mechanic
Denise Ferdinand, Maintenance – Groundskeeper
Guillermo Romero, Maintenance – Groundskeeper
Anthony Dichiara, Maintenance - Groundskeeper
Jason Rosario, Maintenance – Groundskeeper
Jason E. Travis, Maintenance – Groundskeeper
Roberto Figueroa, Maintenance – Groundskeeper
Mark Thompson, Maintenance – Groundskeeper

In the works

THE CHA HAS A NUMBER OF PROJECTS IN THE CONCEPT OR PLANNING STAGES. THESE INCLUDE:

FEDERAL MOD

Margolis Development	Elderly/Disabled	Elevator Replacement	\$650,000 (est)
Margolis Development	Elderly/Disabled	Carport Sprinkler and Drain Replacement	\$129,000 (est)
Scrivano Development	Family	Greenhouse Window Replacement	\$95,000 (est)
Scrivano Development	Family	Basement Window-well Replacement	\$95,000 (est)
Mace Development	Family	Greenhouse Window Replacement	\$84,000 (est)
Mace Development	Family	Basement Window-well Replacement	\$84,000 (est)
Scrivano Development	Family	Fire Alarm System Replacement	\$415,000 (est)
Mace Development	Family	Fire Alarm System Replacement	\$351,000 (est)

STATE MOD

Union Park Development	Elderly/Disabled	ModPHASE	\$4,330,000
Union Park Development	Elderly/Disabled	Sanitary Drain Line Replacement	\$569,599 (est)
Prattville Development	Family	Sanitary Drain Line Replacement	\$569,599 (est)
Prattville Development	Family	Window Replacement	\$750,000 (est)
Fitzpatrick Development	Family	Roof replacement	\$380,000 (est)
Fitzpatrick Development	Family	Front & Rear Door Replacement	TBD
Prattville Development	Family	Heat and Hot Water Boiler Replacement	TBD





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